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of the province to *seraiffs*, or Armenian bankers, at enormous profits ; they again sold the villages and hamlets to police agents and tax-gatherers. These individuals went about rating people at what they liked, utterly regardless of the custom which gave to the heads of the village the right to fix the quota of taxation. As the more land a man cultivated, the more heavily in proportion was he taxed, men ceased to cultivate, except from pure necessity. Then, if a man could not raise the sum demanded, he was beaten and left for dead, his next-door neighbour paying the deficiency. The *haratz*, or capitation tax, paid by all Christians for permission to live, was collected in a barbarous way. It commenced at eighteen, and as in Turkey there are no registrars of births, deaths, and marriages, it was difficult to decide a man's age. The Greeks always denied being eighteen. The Turkish tax-gatherers in the distant provinces decided the question by measuring the man's head.

This system of rule naturally resulted in whole tracts being left desolate, in agriculture being neglected, in the country being in a most wretched and impoverished state. But in many provinces, especially the semi-independent ones, the Turks have yielded to the spirit of the age, and are showing a disposition, at all events, to relax the severity of their rule, and treat their Christian dependents like men. The vastly increased revenue, the wealth, riches, and prosperity of the country, will soon prove the importance of these relaxations and reforms.

The first attempts at agricultural reform and education were total failures, from the peculation, inaptitude, and ignorance of the men who had charge of the affair. The efforts of the few earnest and practical Europeans and Americans failed utterly before such persons as Achmet Fethi Pacha. But renewed efforts have been made, and now the agricultural schools are beginning in earnest, and a certain number of the pupils seem apt, docile, and intelligent. This, with perfect liberty of action to the active and versatile Greek *rayah*, will soon work a great and mighty change.

Hitherto, the Christians—the Armenians excepted, who are the humble and abject servitors of the Turk—have been compelled to conceal whatever little wealth they possessed. A melancholy proof of the great oppression suffered by the *rayahs* in past years exists in the fact that every Christian in Turkey, who has the means to do so, has purchased the protection of some foreign government—has naturalised himself a Swede, a Russian, a Greek of the Otho monarchy, an Aus-

trian, or a Swiss. This once done, he appeals in every case of oppression to his consul, and he is sure of protection. It has been by cunningly encouraging this, making the naturalisation easy, and then giving him, right or wrong, protection of the most hearty character, that Russia has won her way with some of the Greeks.

The enlightened few among the Turks, who have influenced the government to enter warmly on a career of reform, will soon reap the benefit. Already agriculture is progressing ; commerce has grown rapidly ; the Christian race are beginning to feel hope and confidence ; and although the undying hatred of the slave will never be eradicated as long as the religion of Mahomet flourishes above Christianity, or until an amalgamation takes place, it is quite clear that Turkey has made an onward march. It is a question whether she will ultimately be saved as Turkey ; but it is clear to my mind that England cannot allow Russia to clutch this fair portion of the earth, or to erect a throne here, which would depend in the least degree on her for support.

I am more than ever struck with the natural advantages possessed by this city. In the hands of an unscrupulous and ambitious power like Russia, Constantinople would command the Mediterranean. Under Russia, the races would be amalgamated in earnest—that is, cut down to the level of Finlanders and Siberian savages. She would introduce here, probably, the serf system, fortify the city so as to render it impregnable, and deprive all other nations of a share in the commerce of the Black Sea.

The bridge which connects the two sides of the fort is a very great improvement on the old system of taking a *caique*. It appears to be a remarkably good speculation. It is a bridge of boats, part of which is moveable, so that ships of the line can pass when necessary. A company of infantry seem to make little impression on it.

There is a mighty change indeed, within five years, in the appearance of the soldiery. In 1848-9, we could at any time point out a sentry, with his gun against a wall, knitting stockings for a living ; himself ill-clothed, slip-shod, dirty. But they have awaked, as it were, from a dream of ages, and the Turkish soldier is as prim, neat, and military in appearance as the Piedmontese or Swiss. I speak, of course, of the picked troops. But I fancy the best fighting men are the Kurds, Circassians, Albanians, Druses, and the wild Asiatic hordes generally, who are even now pouring in at intervals to fill the ranks of the army.

## M O U Z O N.

THE French canton of which Mouzon is the principal town is watered by the Meuse and the little river of Chiers. The land is very good for agricultural purposes in the deep valleys and broad prairies with which the department abounds ; but the lofty mountains and the craggy rocks are almost destitute of verdure. Yet even these old gray hills are clothed here and there with splendid vineyards, where, beneath the cheerful influence of the southerm sun, the grapes ripen rapidly and fully, and are esteemed the best in the neighbourhood. The old French proverb speaks of these vineyards in terms of flattery. "Heaven preserve to us," it says, "the justice of Omont, the bread of Sapogne, and the wine of Mouzon." Besides the vineyards on the mountains, the valleys, and wide-stretching prairies, the locality is famous for extensive forests—forests which some of our English poets have peopled with creatures of their imagination, and given by this new interest to the place.

One remarkable place is the old city of Beaumont, fortified in 1112 by William "of the white hands," archbishop of Rheims, who succeeded in securing for the people of the city certain privileges and immunities, which were afterwards known as the laws of Beaumont. Charles VII., king of France, obtained possession of Beaumont at the same time that Mouzon fell into his hands ; and in 1379 Mouzon was considered the greatest of all the provinces of Champagne.

Douzy, on the banks of the Chiers given to St. Remi by Clodoald, son of Clodimir, is the property of the bishops of Rheims. There they possess a palace and a park. In the thirteenth century the city was fortified, and surrounded by walls and a broad moat. At Douzy two church councils have been held ; one in 871, and the other in 874.

Villiers, near Mouzon, formerly possessed a *château*, which, although strongly defended, was destroyed in 1536, for fear it should fall into the hands of the Leaguers during the civil disturbances which were then devastating France.

The lordship of Mouzon is of very ancient date. It was reckoned among the possessions of the famous abbey of St. Hubert, which was founded in the eighth century by the kings of France, and under their protection enjoyed a sort of independence till 1789. Every year, in the month of July, the abbot sent to the king a present of hawks and hounds. This presentation was invariably the occasion of a great festival. The king receiving them with great condescension, the men who brought them were most liberally rewarded, and alms were returned for distribution among the poor of St. Hubert.

Mouzon, described in the "Roman Itinerary" as Mosomagus, is the capital of the lordship, and formerly possessed a strong castle, which castle was burnt down by the Normans, and a monastery, or religious house, built on its site.

The church of Mouzon is one of the most important in the department of Ardennes. It was founded in the fourteenth

Independently of this church there was another, in olden times, dedicated to St. Genevieve, and situated in the environs



THE CHURCH OF MOUZON.

century, and is remarkable for the regularity of its construction, the richness of the ornamental work with which it is adorned, and for the sculptured figures on the portal.

of the city. The church afterwards became a convent of Capuchin friars, and the ground is now occupied by a municipal hall.